

Chapter One



Statewide Information System Capacity

- 1. Discuss how effectively the State is able to meet the State plan requirement that it operates a statewide information system that can determine the status, demographics, location, and goals for all children in foster care in the State. In responding, consider the accessibility of this information to State managers and local staff and the usefulness of the information in carrying out the agency's responsibilities.**

I. Overview

The Case and Management Information System (CAMIS) is the Children's Administration's (CA) comprehensive information system for both case management and program management related to Child Protection Services (CPS), Family Reconciliation Services (FRS), and Child Welfare Services (CWS). The system is used by 2,300 caseworkers, clerical staff and managers in 44 offices across the state. CAMIS is utilized to track clients and providers, and provides data for a variety of reports and analyses. Data from the CAMIS system is used to evaluate program performance, to make fiscal and budget projections, to provide information to managers, and to improve service delivery.

Since it was created in 1990, CAMIS has evolved to better serve CA's growing emphasis on continuous quality improvement and research-based practice, and to take advantage of advances in information technology.

Currently, the system is undergoing a transformation from a traditional mainframe/text-based system to a Graphical User Interface (GUI). CA technical staff are also beginning to use and explore Internet-based technology, on-line e-learning, and to explore portability of the system to remote and handheld devices. Over time, the statewide system will continue to add more functionality to close gaps as they are identified and as practice and reporting requirements change.

CAMIS is utilized to manage information spanning all program areas, and is available 24 hours a day. CAMIS provides support to CA headquarters and the field with the data and tools needed for investigation of child abuse and neglect complaints, child protection, family preservation, family reconciliation, foster care, group care, independent living, and adoption services.

CA staff's use of CAMIS is supported by the Office of Information Systems (OIS), which provides information technology services to all programs and divisions within the CA. OIS develops and maintains the system. A steering committee composed of both technical and non-technical staff meets monthly to oversee and prioritize the work that is done in CAMIS. The committee includes representation from headquarters and field staff.

CA provides training and support to workers in the use of CAMIS in each region. In addition, training on the use of CAMIS is integrated into the training academy program for new social workers.

Access to CAMIS has grown significantly over the years. Each worker has access to a computer, which provides access to CAMIS and other word processing software. Every worker uses CAMIS to document the complete history of a case and to assist management and caseworkers in decision-making.

In addition to CA staff, limited secure access has been granted to specific individuals from external groups through data share agreements. These groups include: the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Division of Child Care and Early Learning (DCCEL), the Assistant Attorney General's Office (AAG), County Public Health nurses, the DSHS Office of Child Support Enforcement, and various Tribes in Washington state.

The basic foundation of CAMIS was developed in the early 1990's. The Federal Administration of Children and Families (ACF) reviewed the system during September 22-25, 1997, for conformity to the State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) requirements. Federal SACWIS requirements include both functional and data collection requirements. SACWIS analysts have found CAMIS to be an operational system.

CA's OIS has an action plan to implement the SACWIS system, referred to as the Advance Planning Document (APD). The APD is reviewed annually and updated as necessary. The state continues to improve the interface between the CA and other programs within the state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). State staff continue to work with the Federal SACWIS analysts to raise the State's SACWIS review status from operational to complete. It is estimated that the state will achieve 'complete' status within two years.

II. How CAMIS is Used in the Field

CAMIS is a comprehensive system that assists workers in CA in performing the many functions involved in case management. At the same time, CAMIS captures information from each case, which is aggregated to help track progress toward improving the safety, permanency and well-being of all children in the state's care.

In addition to the many specific tracking and task-performance features of CAMIS, the CA computer system also includes searchable manuals, which are available on-line via the CA Intranet. These manuals include the Practices and Procedures manual, the Case Services Policy Manual, the Children's Administration Operations Manual, and the CAMIS policy manual.

The following describes how CAMIS is used in intake, assessment, provision of services, case management, licensing, and other functions related to the delivery of child welfare services:

Intake

CA operates a 24-hour a day, seven day a week intake system, which is responsible for receiving and processing all referrals statewide. At this initial entry point, workers utilize CAMIS to capture basic information about referrers, children, subjects and family members, including: demographics, allegations and risk factors. Based on the information provided, the intake worker can route the referral to a caseworker in the field where services may be offered.

Screening

CAMIS provides valuable historical information that helps the worker make screening decisions, document the risks, refer a case to an Alternative Response System (ARS) such as law enforcement or public health, and/or accept the referral for investigation. Workers also use CAMIS to record the determination of risk and the safety assessment results.

Establish case record

When a referral of abuse or neglect is accepted for investigation, the referral information is automatically associated with a new case number for the family. If a case number already exists for the family, workers are able to connect the new referrals to the previous case number.

Record/provide client characteristics

CAMIS is used to record extensive client information. Information in CAMIS is collected and tracked with a unique person identifier. Searches are available on the history of addresses, referrals, cases, and family relationships. Child abuse and neglect allegations, findings, and placements are also maintained.

Case Assignment

CAMIS allows for the recording of multiple worker assignments on both referrals and active cases. The system automatically tracks worker assignments.

Record Case Information

CAMIS is utilized to track information about the investigation of a referral through the Service Episodes Reports (SER) module. The module allows the worker to document information related to the referral and investigation. During the investigation, the worker's contacts with family, phone calls, and other information relevant to the investigation are documented and event-tracking codes are used for reporting.

Assess client condition and needs

CAMIS assessment modules are used to record social workers' analyses of factors related to the overall risk to the child, such as the child's and caregiver's condition, the state of the family,

and substance abuse issues. The risk determination then drives subsequent decisions and actions by the social worker.

Children who are in out-of-home care for more than 30 days are assessed using Kidscreen, a child specific assessment process that is used to assess a child's functioning in various domains -- e.g. physical, developmental, educational, emotional/behavioral. This tool assists in the establishment of a benchmark for future client outcomes focused on those domains. The results of Kidscreen are recorded into the child's record in CAMIS.

Determine eligibility

CAMIS is used to determine IV-E eligibility. On-screen edits, linked to business rules, cue staff to conduct IV-E eligibility determinations.

Out-of-home placements

CAMIS provides information on the location, case planning and goals for all children under the supervision or in the custody of the state. The Legal and Placement module in CAMIS provides the ability to update and/or review the legal status of the child. CAMIS also provides the placement history, including demographic information on the child. The module further records information on the addresses of the child's placement provider and family of origin. CAMIS retains a placement history on children and is able to provide a report on the current and past placements locations, the beginning and ending dates of placement events and episodes, episode outcomes, the program (Child Protective Service, Family Reconciliation Service, or Child Welfare Service) that is providing services to the child, and information about the home the child was removed from.

Development of client service plan

CAMIS includes modules for documenting required plans for safety, health, education, family preservation and permanency planning. Development of general service plans for clients is not yet fully automated but references to service plans in word processing documents can be made using CAMIS' SER feature.

Incorporate program requirements and business rules

CAMIS partially incorporates requirements and business rules. Some requirements are built in for intake and eligibility features. During the assessment phase for investigations, CAMIS requires social workers to judge the specific situation against policies and practice guidelines relating to abuse and neglect. A tickler feature is being developed that will alert social workers to complete tasks required for case management within specific time requirements.

Find available, qualified providers and authorize services

CAMIS contains information about available licensed providers and contractors and ensures that licensed and contracted providers are authorized to provide services. CAMIS automatically calculates payment rates for care provided by foster parents. CAMIS-supported service authorizations are uploaded into the State's Social Service Payment System (SSPS). CAMIS contains all authorizations and payment information for children served by the state.

Authorize services

CAMIS automatically uploads service authorizations into the state's SSPS. CAMIS records all authorizations and payment information for children served by the state.

Communication

CAMIS automatically sends an alert to the licensor of a facility when there is a referral alleging child abuse and/or neglect about a child at the facility. CAMIS also provides lists to supervisors identifying the cases that are ready for review, and provides a variety of reports to workers and managers to aid in the decision-making when a case is active.

Record case dispositions and outcomes

CAMIS is used to record and track client dispositions and case outcomes.

III. How CAMIS is used in Program Management

CAMIS provides several important tools for program management:

- Tracking of numbers of cases by program, location and activity;
- Tracking of client demographics;
- Calculating of costs of services, using data from the state's automated Financial Reporting System and SSPS, which is helpful in resource management;
- Supporting performance measurement, both for CA as a whole and for regional and local offices, by providing detailed information about which cases in their offices relate to specific measures and which may require additional attention.
- Supporting managers' creation of customized reports. The new data warehouse, which is under development, will add more tools and functionality to support customized reporting.

IV. CAMIS Reports

Reports by worker, by office, and for the state as a whole

CAMIS generates numerous monthly reports that help social workers, supervisors and managers provide services. CAMIS also produces reports that support quality assurance and performance measurement and provides data for various studies and analyses. Some CAMIS reports are generated and distributed automatically to those who use them; others are made available to those who wish to access them on their computers.

Reports are generated at every level, by worker, by office, by region and statewide. These include monthly statistics, licensing complaints and waivers, complaint activity, investigation finding summaries, licensing renewals, racial statistics on foster parents, foster homes without placements, and foster parents who have not completed required training. The reports also include: worker caseloads, case activity, case assignment flow, placements open by office, contracts by program, referral statistics by program area, referral decision and response time, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) data and ethnicity of clients, law enforcement reports, incident reports, placement histories and rates, length of stay in out-of-home care, summary assessment status, and Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) codes.

Performance measurement and public accountability

Data extracted from the CAMIS system is used to manage performance measurement in CA. CA currently tracks nineteen outcome measures and provides monthly trend reports and interactive spreadsheets on each of the measures. In addition, the *Children's Administration's Annual Performance Report* details progress in meeting outcomes and is published both on the CA's web site and in print. This report is widely used by child advocates throughout the state.

Quality Assurance

CAMIS provides information that enables CA to conduct quality assurance activities. CAMIS data is used by the Children's Administration Data Management Unit and Quality Improvement Section for a variety of quality assurance applications, including: Peer Case Record Review, Monthly Trend Reports, and Interactive Spreadsheets that offer performance outcomes for tracking at office, regional and state levels.

V. Information Sharing with Other Systems and Agencies

County governments, other administrations within the DSHS, Tribes, and the office of the Ombudsman all have limited, secure access to certain CAMIS information.

Graphical interlinked office tools interface with several DSHS databases external to CAMIS. CAMIS receives and uses data from the Title XIX Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS). Information is also sent from CAMIS to the state's IV-A Automated Client Eligibility

System (ACES) and IV-D Support Enforcement Management System. An upgrade to the system is underway to bring information from the Support Enforcement Management System (IV-D) and Automated Client Eligibility System (IV-A) into CAMIS so that information is available to case managers in a central location. These interface projects will result in an efficient, effective and economical method of exchanging information between state information systems, and satisfy federal reporting requirements.

VI. Initiatives to Improve CAMIS

Graphical User Interface

The decision to develop a Graphical User Interface (GUI) was the result of a feasibility study conducted in 1994-1995. Users of the CAMIS system criticized its lack of maneuverability and its inability to transfer to a more recognizable Windows-based technology. Systems development began after the Y2K conversion of the system.

Six modules have been developed in the GUI format: Person, Referral, Foster Care Rate Re-structure, System Security, and Service Episode Recording. Two additional modules are currently in advanced stages of development: License/Facility Complaint and Case Management.

Addressing the complaints of complicated navigation of Classic CAMIS, drop-down list boxes and application ‘wizards’ are used to guide staff through the GUI CAMIS system. A web portal is also being developed in order to provide secure, read-only access to any person or organization external to DSHS who has current data sharing agreements.

To accelerate progress, the GUI Project recently upgraded to Delphi 6.0, a new software development tool. The upgrade will support more web-based services. To improve performance, the project includes an increase in the number of servers and implementation of a load-balancing service.

Data Warehouse Project

The data warehouse project is a means of re-hosting data from the mainframe system. It is designed to enable managers to access the data they need to customize reports. Training for the use of data warehouse will begin in late 2003, and additional data elements will be phased into the project. Although the data warehouse is not a SACWIS requirement, it is an enhancement that has been added to the Advanced Planning Document. Like the GUI project, the data warehouse project did not progress well until after the Y2K conversion was complete.

Project staff have developed reports for the proof of concept as the first iteration of the data warehouse. In order to profit from the lessons learned from other efforts, the team has spent a great deal of time planning and addressing the shortcomings of other data warehouse projects. The first iteration of the data warehouse was recently demonstrated to CA managers.

Interfaces/IV-E Eligibility Project

Within the past year, SACWIS requirements have been finalized. The Title XIX interface is currently in use, and work requests have been submitted for the IV-D and IV-A interfaces. Like IV-D, CA is dependent upon the IV-A agency to resource the work request. Data is already being submitted by CAMIS to the IV-D, IV-A and Title XIX agencies.

CAMIS Case Inactivity Reports

The Washington State's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) audited the CA regarding caseload and staffing issues. CA received good marks for not counting inactive cases in our caseload and for having generally accurate caseload counts.

JLARC did criticize CA, however, for not having a more systematic means of ensuring that cases are moved to inactive status when appropriate. They recommended that we develop tools to improve our consistency in moving cases to inactive status.

The CA management team endorsed an email reminder system through which each worker is provided twice a month with a list of his or her cases that appear to be inactive because of the lack of documented activity in CAMIS.

Workers are alerted when there is no documented activity for 30 days for CPS and FRS cases, and no documented activity in 60 days for CWS cases. Almost any kind of documented activity keeps the case active. If the worker does not document an activity or move the case to inactive status within two weeks after receiving the email alert, then the case will be included in a similar email alert to the supervisor listing cases in the supervisor's unit showing no activity.

In the past, CA management periodically prioritized having staff concentrate for a period of time on closing cases that are no longer active. These concentrated efforts result in more accurate caseload counts for a short period of time, but do not have a lasting effect. They also tend to disrupt the workflow in CA offices. This more routine, systematic approach of e-mail reminders is expected to be both more effective and less disruptive.

Data Integrity Improvement Project

A *Data Integrity Improvement Project* determined the factors that most influence data integrity:

1. Staff perception of the importance of clean data;
2. A statewide strategy for improving data integrity;
3. Clear lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability for implementation of the strategy;
4. Availability of consistent, comprehensive training on data input and data clean-up; and
5. Software development that focuses on data integrity.

Four pilots were implemented by the team and two office-level educational events were presented. A nearly 50% improvement was achieved in the limited area of focus, which supported

the above factors. The project team developed strategies and recommendations to address those factors.

In Region VI, staff were sent an all staff e-mail reminding everyone that a regional policy required that the ACES information system be searched for a correct Date of Birth (DOB). In Region II, the topic of data integrity was discussed at an all staff meeting. The project team did not specifically address the need to improve CAMIS training as it was decided that the group did not have time to wait for current training initiatives to take effect and re-survey staff.

VII. Lessons Learned During the Statewide Assessment

To assess the strengths and challenges of CAMIS, focus groups were conducted in five large field offices in different parts of the state. In addition to the focus groups, the CAMIS system Steering Committee and the statewide CAMIS automation trainers provided valuable information to this assessment.

Strengths

- CAMIS is a useful information system. The system provides access statewide 24 hours a day, and is responsive to the needs of the managers and local staff to carry out CA's responsibilities.
- CAMIS has the capacity to give comprehensive profile information on cases.
- Classic CAMIS and GUI provide options for navigation and search opportunities.
- Current hardware used by CA staff is very adequate. Due to a leasing arrangement for PCs, equipment is current.
- CA continues to make progress in required interfaces, IV-E eligibility, licensing, and case management.

Challenges

- Remote access to CAMIS can be cumbersome. There is sometimes a lag in the current system keeping up with the changes in technology, particularly with wireless and handheld devices such as PALMs, other Pocket PCs, and other Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs).
- Data integrity issues have resulted in some concerns about using the data for program management decision-making (e.g. data may not be updated by worker, or there is confusion as to which Service Episode Record code to use).
- Hand-counts, which require staff time, are still used in some instances to provide performance measurements.

Promising Practices

Virtual Workplace

Access to technical resources from outside the office is troublesome. E-mail, information systems, and other electronic files are often not available to a tele-worker due to ongoing system problems. Dial-up connections are slow and unreliable and the software installation is difficult for many. A worker must be in a CA office to effectively respond to electronic communications, use information systems and access other electronic files.

The *Virtual Workplace* is entering a pilot phase when some workers will be able to access e-mail information systems and other electronic files while outside a CA office. Unlike its predecessor, the requirements to use the new system are uncomplicated. It is easy to use and more resources, typically only accessible in the office, are available through the *Virtual Workplace*. When connected to the system either through a broadband or dial-up connection, a user will be able to see many of the same icons on their remote system as if they were in the office.

By improving better remote access, workers will find it easier to fulfill many of their duties and responsibilities outside the office. Many social workers will be freed up to do field work, which for many is the essence of their jobs.